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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000718

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SUBJECT: FORMIN DETAILS EFFORTS AT SOMALI STABILIZATION,
RECONCILIATION

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

SUMMARY

11. (C) Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin told Ambassador on March 11 that he clearly told Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) leaders during his February 27 visit to Baidoa that they "shouldn't expect the Ethiopian umbrella to be cast for long unless they sat down to serious business." Seyoum noted that he had met with TFG President Yusuf, Prime Minister Nur "Adde," and the Speaker of Parliament together and separately to convey a tough message that the TFG must begin a concerted effort working on the ground to build national institutions of governance and promoting reconciliation and stability. The Foreign Minister noted some positive progress by the TFG in the two weeks since that visit in reaching out to key stakeholders and establishing proposals for establishing security in Mogadishu without alienating key sectors of the population. Noting Ethiopia's unwillingness to remain forward deployed in Somalia, Seyoum requested U.S. assistance to cover the expenses of training 10,000 TFG police and soldiers. End Summary.

A STERN MESSAGE TO THE TFG

12. (C) Seyoum explained that his visit to Baidoa was to push for the TFG to get down to serious business and wield the threat of extracting Ethiopian troops from Somalia if the TFG could not show results. Seyoum particularly criticized the failure of the TFG to establish even offices for the Prime Minister and other cabinet ministries, the absence of half of the Somali parliamentarians from Somalia except to collect their paychecks, the lack of regular cabinet meetings, the lack of MP involvement in reconciliation efforts, and the failure of parliamentary committees to meet. Seyoum reported that he made clear to the TFG President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of Parliament that it would not be possible for the TFG to function if it could not exploit the current situation now.

SOME PROGRESS MADE

13. (C) Seyoum noted that since his visit, there has been some positive progress. He noted that the TFG has sent its first parliamentary delegation to an internally displaced persons camp to talk about security, reconciliation and conditions

needed to prompt returns to their homes. Seyoum noted that such visits will continue. On the broader issue of reconciliation, Seyoum commented that Prime Minister Nur Adde has now finished consultations with the business community which had produced a solid proposal under which the business community would maintain 200 militia members, accountable to the police, to secure Bakara market. While the TFG cabinet has apparently endorsed the proposal, President Yusuf has questions about it. Nevertheless, Seyoum seemed to embrace the proposal as a means to establish control by an acceptable, yet de facto TFG, militia. Seyoum argued that once functioning, it may be possible to scale-up the model to cover other districts within Mogadishu.

14. (C) Seyoum further reported that Prime Minister Nur Adde is now in the process of talking to clan leaders around Mogadishu about broader issues of concern to them. One proposal from such talks is to hold a conference for civil society representatives on the Benadir region. Seyoum noted that such a conference could establish a council to monitor city administration including yielding some authority over the mayor, police, and local judges, subject to the endorsement of the regional council and regional executive. Seyoum was optimistic that the process could bring security and stability to Mogadishu. The Ethiopian Government has conveyed that this type of process must be a priority and that the Prime Minister must not leave Mogadishu without making progress on this front. Seyoum suggested that efforts are on the right track now, and if such a system proves successful, it could be extended toward Kismayo and the Lower Juba area, as well as in Galguduud. Seyoum acknowledged that the TFG lacks the capacity to launch such efforts in all three regions simultaneously.

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HELP US TRAIN POLICE

15. (SBU) Recognizing that keeping Ethiopian troops forward deployed in Somalia poses a financial and security burden on the Ethiopian Government, Seyoum expressed increased Ethiopian interest in training Somali TFG police and defense forces to establish a capable indigenous security apparatus in Somalia. While Ethiopia has already begun training some TFG forces, Seyoum confirmed that Ethiopia could quickly scale up such training to accommodate 10,000 trainees, but funding remains the major obstacle to such an effort. While stressing that this would not be a substitute for a fully deployed and equipped African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeeping operation, Seyoum acknowledged that it is a back up alternative presenting a way to eventually extract Ethiopian troops from Somalia without leaving a security vacuum. Seyoum presented a proposal to the Ambassador for \$17 million for this effort. The Foreign Minister confirmed that Ethiopia is also pressing the European Commission to contribute funding for this effort as well, and asked for the Ambassador's assistance to press the EC to contribute at least toward the police training element.

(Note: Post forwarded the Ethiopian request to AF/E by e-mail on March 11). Seyoum ended the discussion by positively noting that the Ethiopian Finance Ministry will graduate 35 TFG financial and economic sector civil servants from a training program on March 15.

COMMENT

16. (C) Ethiopia appears increasingly unwilling to continue to bear the financial and human cost of maintaining security in Somalia if the TFG is not willing to take the steps necessary to pursue genuine reconciliation and institution building in Somalia. While the initial progress made since Seyoum's February 27 visit to Baidoa is positive, if the TFG proves unwilling or unable to sustain momentum in this direction, Ethiopia appears increasingly willing to extract itself from

the quagmire even if an ideal alternative to fill the security void is not available. Post encourages the Department to seriously consider how the United States can contribute toward security sector training for TFG police and defense forces. End Comment.
YAMAMOTO